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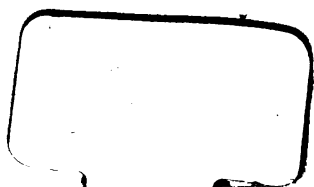
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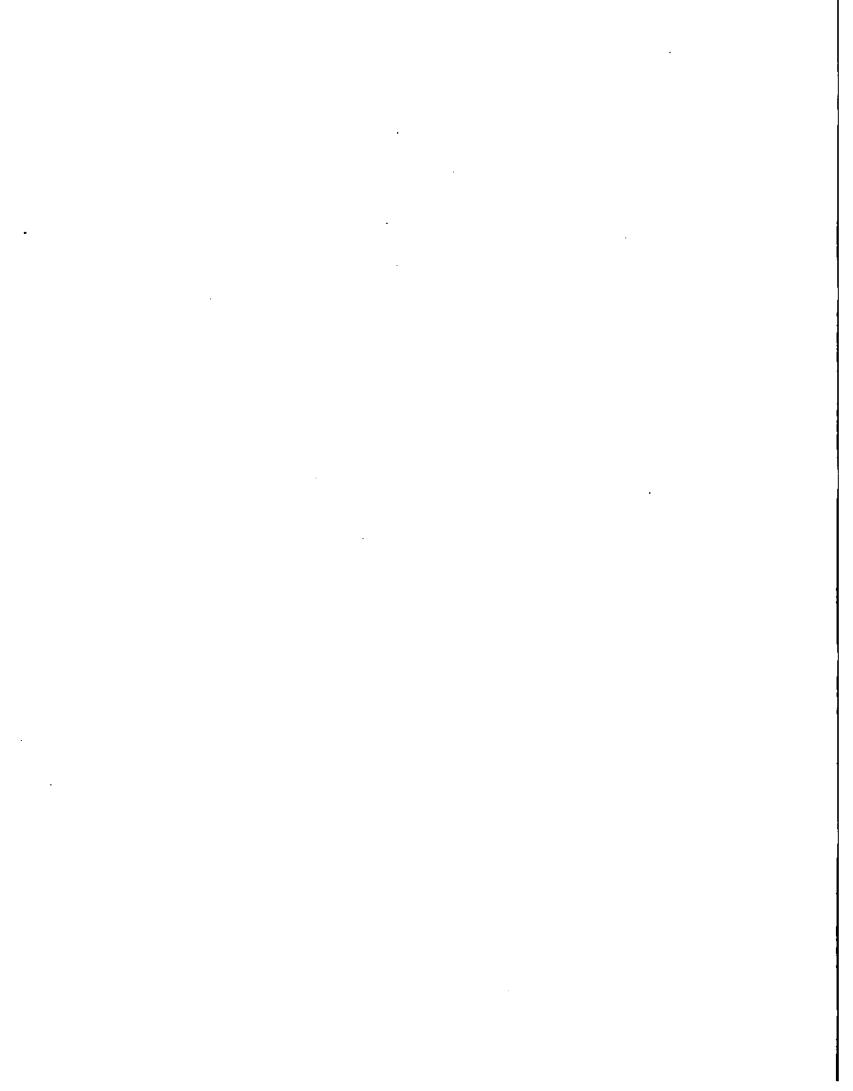




Fanny dear
from her story heartless
Paper

November 19 1911

"COLLEGERS v. OPPIDANS."



"COLLEGERS v. OPPIDANS:"

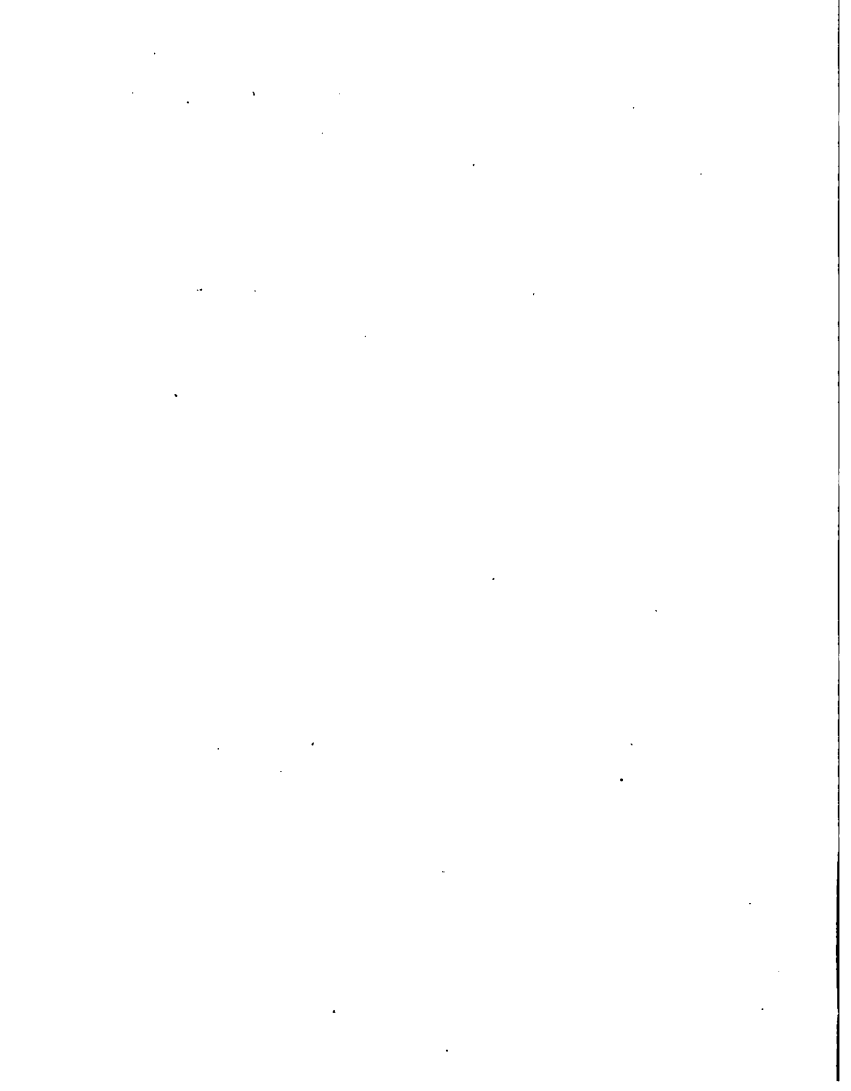
A REMINISCENCE OF ETON LIFE.

BY
AN OLD ETONIAN.

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“COLLEGERS *v.* OPPIDANS.”

I.

AT that time, when the school, not having yet swollen to its present bulky proportions, contained only six hundred and fifty fellows, and Harrow, its arch-rival, something like half that number ; when the new school-buildings on the Slough road were not yet dreamed of, and both fourth form and lower school attended service in the College Chapel like their superiors in the other divisions ; when the College Chapel itself was a cold and bleak sanctuary, with but three or four stained-glass windows and no brass candelabra ; and when the College dining-hall, yet bleaker than the Chapel, had no stained-glass windows at all, no tessellated pavement, no polished wainscot, yawning fireplace, gilt scutcheons or stately portraits ; when, instead of the Bucks constabulary who now patrol its

streets day and night, there limped solitary old Tom Bott, in his light-blue livery, with the Eton arms on his left sleeve and the Waterloo medal on his breast; and when, in a word, Eton was not quite the place it is now, nor yet so different but that present Etonians may easily imagine what manner of a spot it was;—then, in those days, when Dr. Goodford ruled over the upper school, and Mr. Coleridge over the lower, and when Spankie, the tart-man, still sold his wares opposite Mrs. Drury's boarding-house—I, Rivers, was sent to Eton, and became, after the usual fortnight's grace, the fag of Asheton, a fellow in the eight, in the upper division of the fifth form, and captain of my tutor's house.

I think it better to premise, however, that this tale is not destined to commemorate adventures of my own, but those of a fellow-fag called Jickling—Jickling, who had already been at the school a year when I arrived there, and was by common consent accounted the most idle, unkempt, incapable, and, in a general way, the least promising among the six hundred and fifty of us. It is a painful thing to say, but nobody esteemed Jickling. His

house-fellows were ashamed of him, and regarded him as a black sheep in their small, eminently tidy fold ; our tutor viewed him with a cool and careful eye. If it had been put to anybody in the school whom it would have been the least desirable fellow to mess with, have a "lock-up"¹ with, or indeed be intimately associated with in any way, the answer would have been "Jickling ;" and this impression was more than doubled by the cynicism, not to say effrontery, with which Jickling bore off his shortcomings. For of shame at his own unworthiness Jickling possessed none. Thus I had not been five minutes in his company on the night

¹ Lock-up (*subaud.*) boat. The lock-up boat is a private skiff chartered for the boating-season at a cost of 5*l.* It is distinguished from the "chance boat" in that the subscriber to the latter pays 2*l.* 10*s.*, but must take his chance of any boat that happens to be unhired at the time he wants to row or scull, and has not the exclusive right to any particular boat. The cost of a "lock-up," may be shared by two friends, that of a chance boat cannot be. The word "lock-up," taken in another sense, indicates the hour at which boys must be back to their tutors' houses of an evening. This hour varies according to the season—the extremes being 8.45 p.m. at midsummer, and 5 p.m. during November and December.

of my arrival, before he informed me—not a little to my consternation, when I understood what he meant—that he expected to be “swished” on the very next morning for having, in the train down from Paddington, blown a mouthful of peas into the face of an engine-driver, and been “nailed” in the act by a master who had got into the carriage next his at Ealing ; and this communication was quite of a piece with Jickling’s habitual confidences respecting himself. He was continually playing a part in those short but painful interviews with the head master that are conducted in the presence of the sixth-form præpostor and two “holders down ;” and nobody would have ventured to assert that he came out from these interviews otherwise than hardened in spirit—however it might be in person—and steadfastly minded to be peccant again as soon as he had the opportunity. He was one of those unfortunate boys who seem predestined to go wrong. Though provided with good clothes enough, his dress was always shabby and ill-matched, the trousers of one suit doing duty with the waistcoat of another ; and though he was supplied with money sufficient, and more than sufficient, for all his needs, yet he never had a six-

pence, and was always in debt. Desperate passages of arms would take place between him and the Spankie already mentioned, as he endeavoured to glide unobserved past that worthy at school-hours, and not only with Spankie, but with all the other tart-men, Spankie's colleagues, who lined the low wall which bisects the College part of High Street and forms a bulwark to the school-yard. No sooner, indeed, did Jickling heave in sight, with his necktie all awry, his hat brushed the wrong way, and his pockets bulging out with five balls, stumps of half-eaten pears, and blotted *pænas* (i.e. Punishment MSS.), than Spankie himself, brown-trousered Levi, Spankie's next neighbour and *vis-à-vis*, red-faced, straw-hatted Jobie, whose basket was a step further on, grey-coated old Brion, who wheeled about a whole vehicle full of confectionery, and certain desultory vendors, who sold apples peripatetically, would set up a chorus of howls and appeals, that would be taken up at the very school-gate itself by blue-cloaked Mrs. Pond—more familiarly “Missus”—who, seated on a low stool, retailing fruit and dormice, would shrilly call upon Jickling for pence long overdue. In school, Jickling was as unsatisfactory as out of it. When called

up to construe, he never knew where to go on : often he had brought the wrong book ; and somehow, he generally contrived to get himself weighted with a sentence to write out and translate the lesson before he had fairly started. And when he had started, who shall describe the torrent of solecisms, false quantities, and hideous translation that flowed imperturbably from his mouth ? With a coolness utterly and unquestionably beyond rivalling, he would declare that *bis* was the dative plural of *bos*, and *sum* the accusative singular of *sus*, and that the correct rendering of *basis virtutum constantia* was “constancy is the basest of the virtues.” Sometimes indeed, under immediate and forcible threats of condign punishment, he would so far prepare his lesson as to go through it twice attentively with a “crib” before proceeding into school, and on such occasions, his memory not being retentive, he would generally treat his hearers to something in this style :—

(*Reading.*) “*Nux ego juncta viæ cum sim sine crimine vitæ,*

A populo saxis prætereunte petor.”

&c.

(*Construing.*) “*Nux ego*, I a nut ; *juncta viæ*, joined

to the road-way ; *cum sim sine crimine*, since I am without crime ; *petor*, am sought for ; *prætereunte*, as I go by ; *a populo saxis*, by the Saxon people."—And so on, until pulled up by a dismayed howl from the master, and enjoined to write out Ovid's "Medea to Jason" in a legible hand, and bring it the next day at one o'clock. As to Jickling's verses, they stood on a par with his prose performances, and were a continuous source of distorted nightmares to our unhappy tutor, whose duty it was to correct and put some sort of shape into them. It was currently reported that, having to turn into hexameters the two lines,

He left a name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral or adorn a tale,

Jickling had laboriously fabricated this :—

Nomen linquebat per quod jam palluit orbis,
Pungere moralem aut caudam decorare superbam ;

and certainly this would have been rather above than below the average of his ordinary productions. Needless to add that, although Jickling was in lower fourth, that is, in the last division of the upper school, he had only arrived there after failing to pass his first examination out of the lower

school. It was even rumoured that he would have been rejected the second time had it not been for the Macchiavellic determination of the lower master to get rid of him at any price, as a boy whose incurable idleness was contagious, and likely to corrupt the whole form. So there was Jickling, at the very bottom of his division—a boy of about twelve, with lank hair of a muddy flaxen colour ; fingers permanently ink-stained ; Balmoral boots that were never laced ; and a curious white face, that looked inquiringly at you, out of a pair of eyes so wild, shift, and defiant in their expression, that it was a wonder Nature had not taken them to put into the head of a polecat.

Now that Jickling should have flourished in our midst was a circumstance astonishing enough, seeing that of all the staid and proper youngsters I have ever met with, the Etonians were certainly the most exemplary ; but that he should have been the fag of such a fellow as Asheton was a downright puzzle ; for Asheton, being captain of the house, and entitled to four fags, might have chosen any one he pleased, and was under no compulsion whatever to select Jickling, who blacked his toast

for him, spilled the gravy of sausages over his trousers, and, when sent to carry a note, invariably took it to the wrong place. There could have been no community of thought or sympathy between Asheton and Jickling; for the two were simply as opposite to each other as white is to black, or coal to sugar. What Jickling did wrong, Asheton did well; and what Asheton did well, Jickling was morally certain to do wrong. Asheton was a quiet and finished type of that class of boys who at Eton are termed "swells"—a subtle designation, the exact meaning of which it is not very easy to explain to outsiders. A boy was not a swell because he dressed well, or played cricket well, or boated well, or was high up in the school. All this had to be touched off with certain social qualities, and a great—I was going to say almost exaggerated—air of personal dignity, before the swell was complete. Stumpes maximus, the best bat in the eleven, who would alternately slash an innings of sixty and be bowled out first ball; who slouched about the streets with his hands in his pockets, and nodded good-naturedly to lower boys of his acquaintance—Stumpes was a very pleasant fellow,

and immensely popular, but he was no swell. Cashman, again, whose father owned five millions sterling, and stuffed a fifty-pound note in each of his son's waistcoat-pockets in sending him back to school after holidays—Cashman was anything you please: well dressed, well bejewelled, generous, and conceited, but nobody called him a swell, neither was he one. Asheton, on the other hand, was a swell *nem. con.* He was not surpassingly excellent in anything, but he was good at everything, and might be relied on in everything. He pulled a capital oar, without great dash, but conscientiously and in fine form; he, moreover, bowled and batted well enough to hold his own with credit in any match that took place in that part of the playing-fields called "Aquatics," and reserved for "wet bobs," or fellows whose habitual vocation was the river. At fives and football he was also counted among the first; but in these and all other pastimes the great merit of him was that his play was sure. As he had played to-day, so would he play to-morrow; there was nothing unequal in him, no wavering, no unexpected breaking down at a moment when all the hopes of his

friends were centred on his performance. Personally, he was neatness itself. About eighteen years old, lightly built, and rather above middle height, he had a handsome, aristocratic face of essentially English mould, though perhaps a little too serious for his age, and a figure that was fitly set off by the absolutely faultless style in which he dressed. His white cravat, tied as only Etonians used to tie them; his speckless linen, glossy hat, and trimly folded silk umbrella, were things to see, admire, and copy; the more so as Asheton was always trim, always speckless, always glossy, whatever befell—even though, for instance, he had been rowing up to Monkey Island, and had reached Windsor Bridge on his return, with only seven minutes in which to land, dress, and run down to College, to answer to the calling of his name at two-o'clock "Absence"—a circumstance of not unfrequent occurrence, and always particularly trying to the "swell" temperament. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the extent to which we young shavers respected Asheton; but mind, I say *respected*, not *liked*; for Asheton would no more have been familiar with a lower boy in-doors,

or taken notice of him in the streets, than a colonel would chum with a private soldier; and our feelings towards him were consequently much of the same reverential order as a soldier's might be towards an officer who was kind and just, but cold and a little of a martinet. When I have added that in his school-work Asheton shone pretty much as he did in athletics, that is, uniformly and moderately well, without startling brilliancy—that, for example, after an examination, his name was generally to be found between the fifteenth and the twenty-fifth on the list (out of seventy or eighty), and that in the half-yearly trials or "collections" he was habitually in the second class—I shall, I think, have said all that is needful to fill up his portrait.

To sum up: Without being one of those overpoweringly good youths whom we are bound to admire in books, and whom, in private life, we do so deeply and ardently long to see flogged, he was a slightly prim, accomplished, and honourable young Briton, whom our tutor did well to enjoin us, smaller boys, to imitate, and whom we certainly should have striven to imitate, whether he had

enjoined it or no. Nobody would have said of Asheton (at least, not we his fags, who were apt to judge of things superficially) that he was one of those fellows who blossom out into Pitts, Cannings, Wellingtons, or other of those swell Etonians whose busts in marble adorn the upper schoolroom ; but he was a boy who might develop, when the due season came, into an unimpeachable M.P., a Chairman of Quarter Sessions void of reproach, or, if he took to soldiering, into an officer who, in victory or defeat, would make an unbragging stand with his men against quintuple odds, and die, firm to his post, with cool intrepidity.

This said by way of introducing my *dramatis personæ*, let me, with your leave, take up the thread of my narrative at the point where, having just arrived at Eton in the month of September of the year 185—, I learned that untidy Jickling and I were to be fag-mates.

It was not Jickling himself who brought me this piece of news, but Stumpes minor, brother to the Stumpes in the Eleven, who entered my room on the next morning but one after my arrival, holding a copper kettle in one hand and a plate of muffins

in the other, and said, "Rivers, you're to come down with me to Asheton's room."

I cannot say this summons caused me anything like a great pleasure, for at the private school whence I came the word "fag" had been held up *in terrorem* over me by everybody who had ever pronounced it. Certain of my schoolfellows, amicably jealous, no doubt, of my going to Eton, had given me clearly to understand that, as a preliminary to all further relations with me, my fag-master would begin by having me tossed in a blanket, then set me to blacken his boots for him, and that, on my failing to polish these to such a degree of perfection as would admit of his shaving himself by their help instead of in a looking-glass, he would order me to stand on my head in the middle of the room, and take shots at me with a toasting-fork. Jickling, who had apparently divined the existence of these fears in the course of our first conversation, had, on the second occasion of our discoursing, taken benevolent pains to develop them; and he was in the act of gloomily relating to me how this very Asheton had once fagged him to go to the top of the "Long Walk," a distance of four miles

and a half, walking all the way on his hands, legs uppermost, when he was severely interrupted by one Greegleby, four foot high, but irascible, and protector of the weak, who joined us on the pavement outside our tutor's house, where the interview was taking place, and cried out indignantly, "Shut up, Jickling : it's a chouse greening new fellows."

"You're always doing something caddish," followed up young Biazepole, whose head was like an orange-coloured mop, and who, leaning against a door-post, was gravely counting what remained of three pounds he had brought back with him after an equitable settlement of all his debts.

"None but a snob would tell such confounded cracks as that to a fellow who's not been here a week," pursued Greegleby, still very wroth, for it was evident that it went sore against his notions of morality that anybody should be deceived until he had been at school long enough to be prepared for it.

"If I waited a week he wouldn't be greenable," answered Jickling, coolly ; and saying this, he turned one of the pockets of his trousers inside out, and proceeded to remove a piece of Everton toffee

that was sticking in a corner thereof. "New fellows," added he, sucking the toffee, "are like puppies—they begin to see clear towards the ninth day."

"Don't mind what he says, Rivers!" exclaimed young Greegleby, loftily. "Nobody pays any attention to him."

"No, Nobody," assented Blaze-pole, who had just ascertained that his resources amounted to one pound sixteen shillings and a penny, and was restoring his wealth to his pocket-book.

So I was informed both by Greegleby and Blaze-pole, the one corroborating the other, that I had nothing to fear from Asheton, that he was a good fellow, and that he never bullied, because bullying was a blackguardly thing, only practised at "low schools," but never at Eton. Yet somehow these assurances must have left me not altogether convinced, for it was with something very like a feeling of being about to suffer tribulation that on the following morning I obeyed the summons of Stumpes minor, and followed him, the copper kettle, and the muffins, down to the room where Asheton lodged.

I remember this room as if I were still standing in it now, on that bright September morning, with my heart going thump—thump against my brown waistcoat, and my cheeks flushed with anticipatory emotion. It was a largish room, perhaps twenty feet by fifteen, and had two windows, both of which were curtained with some warm purple stuff, which I took for silk, but which was probably not that, and filled with flower-boxes, where glowed some scarlet geraniums, whose showy coats stood out bravely against the dull bricks of a boarding-house opposite. The carpet under our feet was what is, I believe, called a Kidderminster, but it was an honest Kidderminster of good ruddy hue, chosen to match with which was the crimson figured paper, not very expensive I should say the yard, but handsome nevertheless, and sundry velvet brackets supporting pewter and silver prize-cups, on one of which I read floridly engraved : "*Frederick Asheton, Winner of the Pulling. Floreat Etona.*" In the way of furniture, provided by our tutor, and destined to pass along with the room itself to successive owners, were, in addition to the carpet above-mentioned and its attendant hearth-rug, a

shut-up bedstead, which had done unmistakable service already, if one might judge by its venerable oaken complexion ; a bureau, on the leaf of which Asheton had (presumably in the lower-boy phase of his existence) carved his initials and crest ; four Windsor chairs, also carved and chipped ; a shut-up wash-hand-stand, with a piece of oil-cloth in front of it ; and a square deal table, covered with a red flowered table-cloth, and, like the chairs, carved to any lengths, if you were only prying enough to lift up a corner of the table-cloth and see. But all these items played only a subsidiary part in the adornment of the chamber, for it is not to his tutor that an Eton boy looks to make his room cosy. From the day when he is installed in the small apartment, which is his to do with as he pleases (blessed privilege !), the boy's one thought is how to give it that habitable look which smells of home ; and in Asheton's case this preoccupation, extended over six years, had taken shape in pictures, stuffed-bird cases, and useful knickknacks, in such numbers as to make the room seem almost alive with comfort, colour, and cheerfulness. By gazing with a little attention, too, one could detect at

what different dates the things had been bought, and so follow the boy through the various gradations of taste and culture engendered by his public-school training. Those flashy-looking sporting cracks, now relegated to an obscure corner, had clearly been purchased when a love of paint predominated over other considerations, and when the chief thing to be aimed at was the making of much effect with little money. By-and-by taste had improved; the fourth form was abandoned and the remove was reached. The young investor had said, "Instead of these staring things that are too cheap to be good, I'll lay out a couple of pounds at one sweep." Yet not daring to trust his own taste so far as to select something quite original, he had resolved to buy what he had most often heard praised; hence, "Dignity and Impudence" and "Laying down the Law," by Landseer; "My Dog," "My Horse," "The Rent Day," and a few more prints as well known and popular; intermingled with which were a case of stuffed frogs playing cricket, and a case of stuffed squirrels fighting a duel, the blood of the worsted squirrel being realistically represented by a blotch of mean-

dering sealing-wax. Then the upper-boy sphere of white ties, five-pound "tips" and ten-pounds half-yearly pocket-money, had been attained ; and trained enough by this time to essay his own taste unshackled, the lover of river sports and member of the Eight had chosen a really admirable series of water-colours depicting Thames scenery, and artistically done by hand, not chromographed. You would think that this agglomeration of lights and shades must have formed a strange medley ; but no, everything was in its place, looked well where it was, and did its share towards making up that comfortable total which means snugness. There was no such thing as a vacant place on the walls ; every inch of space was filled up. Here a pair of prize foils with velvet and gilt handles ; here a miniature out-rigger with the date of a race upon it ; here again, nailed to the wall near the fireplace, three ribbons, scarlet, dark blue, and light blue respectively, and lettered, "Saint George," "Britannia," and "Victory," the names of the three boats to which Asheton had in turn belonged ; and there, five feet above the mantelpiece, a set of branching antlers decked out with a couple of

those small silk flags such as flutter from the bows at boat-races, and with a gala straw-hat emblazoned with the Eton scutcheon, and made to be worn at the 4th of June and Election Saturday regattas. I shall not have enumerated everything, however, if I do not allude to a picture, of no great merit in itself, but which had evidently, through all changes and chances, held the same post in Asheton's room—and that the post of honour. It was a picture of a country house—of home—executed by mother's or sister's hand, and hung just under the antlers over the mantleshef, the first thing that struck you as you went in, and the thing towards which the eye most gladly returned after roaming over everything else. Asheton had stuck a couple of home valentines in the frame of this picture, and in one of the nail-rings a wedding favour, memento of some home wedding.

I took in all this at a glance, though I have been five minutes describing it; and I had leisure to examine the whole room in detail, while Stumpes mi., to whom, presently, was added Blazepole, began laying his master's breakfast-things. For Asheton had not turned round on our entry; he

was seated at his bureau, reading up his seventy lines of Horace for eleven-o'clock school, by the aid of Mr. Smart's translation ; and as Stumpes did not see fit to call his attention to my presence, neither, of course, did I. Stumpes directed me to take my stand against a wall—which I did meekly—and to watch how he "did the things, so as to be able to manage like me, you know, in a fortnight's time:" which I also complied with, for to see a cloth laid by so extremely small and dignified a person as Stumpes was somewhat of a novelty to me. First, Stumpes removed the scarlet table-cloth, and threw it to Blazepole, who folded it ; then the pair between them laid the white cloth, which Stumpes had extracted from a cupboard, smoothed it, and set upon it a cup, saucer, sugar-basin, milk-jug, slop-basin, and two plates of a white pattern with blue rims. Then Stumpes possessed himself of a Britannia-metal teapot, and put therein three powerful spoonfuls of tea, holding out the pot at the same time for Blazepole to pour in boiling water *quantum suff.*; this done, out from the cupboard came a metal spoon, a knife and a three-pronged fork with

white handles, three new rolls and a pat of butter—edibles that were promptly followed by a ham, drawn out of an open hamper, and laid by Stumpes upon a dish which Blazepole was sent to fetch; a Yorkshire pie and a pot of marmalade, the bladder covering of which Stumpes deftly removed with a knife, as if used to such work. The muffins came last, but were advantageously planted beside the teapot, along with a hot-water contrivance that had been employed to keep them from cooling. Then Stumpes, having cast a searching glance to assure himself that there was nothing wanting, he and Blazepole were seized with a violent fit of coughing, which would have effectually precluded all further work on Asheton's part, had he not understood the hint, and risen. It was then his eye lit upon me.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said, civilly; "I didn't know you were in the room. Why didn't you tell me, Stumpes?" With which words he seated himself at the table, and pointed silently to the ham, as a hint to Blazepole that the carving-knife and fork had been forgotten. Both fags rushed together towards the cupboard, ex-

changing mutual reproaches *soto voce*. “Your name’s Rivers, I believe?” added Asheton, buttering a roll. “Northamptonshire or Somersetshire Rivers?” And he made a second gesture towards the ham, thus intimating to Stumpes to begin carving, which that model fag proceeded to do on the spot with the expertness of a professional.

“Somersetshire,” I answered, feeling very much like adding, “Sir.”

“And in what form are you placed?” continued Asheton, receiving on his plate a slice of ham half a foot in diameter, and thin as a wafer.

“Blazepole, you’ve forgotten the mustard,” whispered Stumpes, sepulchrally.

“It was you that forgot it,” retorted Blazepole, in the tone of a conspirator; but he made a dive at the cupboard for the empty mustard-pot, and vanished out of the room with it, scrambling down the staircase four steps at a time, *en route* for the kitchen.

“In lower fourth,” I replied to Asheton’s question, feeling more and more like saying “Sir,” and unable to take my eyes off him, as he ate a muffin, waiting till the mustard had arrived.

"Well, you are excused fagging till next Thursday week," he rejoined, cutting up his ham ; "and after that you'll fag for me, along with Stumpes there, Blazepole, and Jickling. But, by the way, where *is* Jickling? Has he shirked fagging?" And Asheton looked up from his plate and round the room inquiringly.

Stumpes did not immediately answer. He had no respect for Jickling, but he had a great deal for those time-honoured principles that prohibit tale-telling ; so, with more solicitude for the interest of these principles than for those of abstract truth, he proceeded to invent an excuse for his absent fag-mate, not knowing more than the man in the moon to what that absence was due.

"I think my tutor sent for him after prayers," he said.

"What about?"

"Probably for not being at prayers," responded Stumpes, bravely.

"But he *was* at prayers," remarked Asheton.

"Then it must have been for something else," said Stumpes, perplexed ; but he was spared the trouble of drawing further on his imagination, for

at that moment there was a precipitate shuffling of feet in the passage, and a double entry—Blazepole with the mustard, and Jickling himself with nothing.

It was the first time Asheton had seen Jickling that half, so he held out his hand.

"How do you do, Jickling?" he said.

"'Do, Asheton?" mumbled Jickling, extending a dusky paw.

"Late, of course," pursued Asheton.

"Yes," returned Jickling, withdrawing the paw, and thrusting it deep into a trouser-pocket, where, finding some coppers, it began to rattle them.

"And what's this I hear," asked Asheton, helping himself to mustard, and speaking without a smile, "that you've already been flogged, by way of beginning the half well?"

"Yes," said Jickling, gloomily; "I had seven cuts."

"For shooting peas?"

"They were small peas," remonstrated Jickling. "Besides, I don't see what right a master has to nail me when I'm in a coloured tie. I was in the train—hadn't yet reached Eton, nor put on my black tie. The train stops at Hanwell. I fish

out a pea-shooter, and let fly at the engine-driver of a neighbouring train. A master pokes his head out of the next carriage-window, and says, 'What's your name? Where do you board? I shall complain of you.' I call that snobbish."

"What do you call shooting the peas?" asked Asheton, quietly.

Jickling stared; but, after turning the matter over, declined to take any notice of this question. He recommenced to rattle his coppers.

"Ah! that reminds me," broke in Asheton; "before you've spent all your money, please to pay me your football subscription."

Jickling pulled an excessively wry face; not so Stumpes and Blazepole, who, with the alacrity of habit, and without being asked, drew out their purses, and laid on Asheton's table the sum of 3*s.* 6*d.* apiece.

"It's for the footballs, the goal-sticks, the cad who takes care of the balls, and the beer we drink after playing," explained Stumpes to me in a whisper. "Fork out yours too." And under Stumpes' direction, I forked out 3*s.* 6*d.*

Jickling, meanwhile, had rummaged in his

pockets, and produced a sovereign, which he gazed at with an eye of affection, as apparently his last. Then, after a good deal more fumbling, he managed to scrape together the requisite smaller sum, parting, however, with all his copper money to effect this total, which formed a brown heap on the table. Asheton had been silently disposing of his ham. He now looked up fixedly at Jickling, and said, "Have you paid all your debts, Jickling?"

"What debts?" asked Jickling, sulky and embarrassed.

"Your ticks to Spankie, Jobie, and the other men at the wall. You owed them all something."

"Yes," grumbled Jickling, more and more sulky.

"Then, you owe no one anything now?"

"Nothing," answered Jickling in a tone and with a morose look that bore an economy of truth on the face of them.

"Well, then," returned Asheton, either believing or pretending to believe, "you are free to make a fresh start now, and to turn over a new leaf for the future—and you must try and do it for your own sake. I don't want to say anything unpleasant, mind you," added he, in a voice which I think took

us all aback by its sudden seriousness ; “but up to this time, Jickling, your life at Eton has been a failure ; and as we all in this house are concerned for our own honour in not seeing you go to the bad, I mean to keep a sort of a look-out over you this half. Yes. I don’t mean to spy over you or pry about you, or anything of that kind ; but I shall make an attempt to render you fit for something, as you’ve hitherto been fit for nothing. Last half, and the half before, you never played and you never worked. You spent your time mooning about, with your face unwashed, your lessons unlearned, and no sort of object in life but to catch flies, count the dogs in Fisher the birdman’s yard, run into idiotic mucks, and get swished. That won’t do. Be anything you please—a sap, a dry-bob, or a wet-bob²—but be something. Going on as you’re doing, you’d be a confirmed muff, and perhaps a leg, by the time you’re twenty ; and then, of course, you’d lay it half to me, and say that if Asheton, who was your fag-master, had done his duty, you wouldn’t be where you are. And that’s true. If

² “A sap,” “a dry-bob,” or “a wet-bob,” *Anglicè*, “a book-worm,” “a cricketer,” or “an oarsman.”

I had a brother here, I shouldn't let him follow the road you're treading, so I don't see why I should allow you. I'll say more—I don't think it would be honest or fair to allow you. And now that's enough," concluded Asheton, quietly pouring himself out some tea. "You may run along, all of you ; and as for you, young man " (turning his eyes on me), " bear in mind what I've just said to Jickling. Be something : give yourself an object, and, if it's an honourable one, you won't be sorry for it by-and-by."

In another minute we were all standing outside Asheton's door, and I, whom my fag-master's few words had impressed more than any pulpit-sermon I had ever heard, drew a sigh of relief to think what my fears of the morning had all come to, and what manner of a fellow it was I was going to serve.

"Is he always like that?" I asked of Jickling, with some emotion.

"Yes," answered Jickling, in huge indignation ; "he's always fond of jawing. What business has he to question me about my ticks? they don't concern him. And why does he say he shall spy

and pry into me all this half? He hasn't the right to do it. No, he hasn't. And it's hateful snobbishness of him to pretend he has."

Whereat Jickling turned round facing the door, and raising his hand to a level with his countenance, made, I regret to state, with his displayed fingers, that gesture which, in all times and in all countries, has been expressive of contemptuous defiance.

II.

OUR life at Eton was by no means a monotonous one, and a new fellow especially had so many things to visit, be initiated in, and marvel at, that his first month was a sort of honeymoon, very different from the first months at ordinary schools. We were not overburdened with work either, as times then went ; or, to speak more correctly, we had plenty of work set us, but didn't do it, which came to the same thing. I used sometimes to wonder, as I sat on those good hard brown benches in the upper school, just under Camden's bust, what kind of thoughts must pass through our master's mind as he contemplated the seventy-five of us who formed his division, and ruminated over the distressing idea that not ten out of the whole company knew their lessons, or had known them yesterday, or purposed knowing them to-morrow. I do not mean to say by this that we were all as slothful as Jickling.

The difference between him and us was, that we kept up appearances. When called up to construe, we could generally stammer through the lesson without committing more than a rational number of blunders—say one per line ; and we strove to do our verses and themes in such a way as to occasion us as few introductions as possible to the head master. But beyond this, perhaps, the least said the better.

It used to be the golden rule at Eton to give us twice more work than we could honestly do, and to class us in divisions three times as big as a single tutor could conscientiously supervise ; the result of which was that, with the exception of a few paragons (chiefly collegers or foundation boys) in every form, who went by the graceful epithet of “sap,” and were regarded with a respectful and affectionate contempt by the rest, everybody did just the amount of study that was absolutely and barely necessary to keep him out of trouble, but no more. And what this bare amount was may be pleasantly judged by the fact that even when a boy had reached to such a position in the school as Asheton occupied, he still learned all his

lessons by the aid of the Bohn classics, feeling quite powerless to master them otherwise.

I mention this to explain how it was that I found I had a good deal of spare time on my hands as soon as I settled down to Eton life. My comrades quickly inducted me into the science of taking things easy with regard to school work ; and Jickling, who was an apt teacher that way, would have had me adopt the same spirit in all the other businesses and obligations of our small world. Somehow he had taken a fancy to me, had Jickling. It must have been my newness that did it, and also the circumstance that we two were neighbours—which allowed him, by the way, to bear down upon me at all hours and borrow articles of my property, which he scrupulously forgot to return. Jickling was not only one of those boys who are bent upon going wrong themselves, but he dearly loved to drag others into scrapes with him. I was warned of this fatal propensity on his part both by Greegleby and Blazepole ; Stumpes mi. also conveyed a friendly admonition to me on the subject, and Asheton one morning sent for me on purpose to say that I must be careful what I did when Jickling was by

to advise me. But these counsels, though they kept me from falling into any of Jickling's more dangerous snares, did not remove him from my company. He was always with me. He acknowledged with a candour that did him honour, that he liked "fellows whom you could humbug till all was blue;" and on my soliciting an explanation, abruptly and gravely asked me when my birthday was.

"In October," I answered, naively.

"Next month?" said he. "Well, it's to be hoped" (and his eyes glared 'on me half intimidatingly)—"it's to be hoped that you'll do what's usual, and not be mean and shabby, as some new fellows are. Every new fellow who's worth his weight in rags goes to Goodford and asks him to give the whole school a holiday on the first birthday he spends here. Only the rule is to ask a month in advance, so as to prevent mistakes, and allow Goodford time to order the fireworks."

"What fireworks?" I inquired.

"Why, the fireworks that are let off in the playing-fields on a new fellow's birthday," answered Jickling. "And then there's the ginger-wine.

After the fireworks, ginger-wine's handed round, and everybody has a glassful ; fifth form, two glasses full. You'll have to see to all that."

Now there was nothing improbable in any of this to my fresh and unsuspecting mind. At my private school (we had numbered twelve there) every birthday had been an occasion for festivity, and ginger-wine had always formed a prominent feature in the day's entertainment. I saw no reason why it should not be so at Eton ; nay, I considered that Eton, being the worthier place, would probably hold the more strenuously to a worthy custom. So, to be brief, that self-same afternoon I was standing, by Jickling's direction, under the colonnade of the school-yard, in the presence of Dr. Goodford and of all the school præpostors, gathered together, as was the rule, to deliver their bills of absentees, or of boys on the sick-list, after three-o'clock chapel. Dr. Goodford, seeing me stand beside him with my hat on, began by asking me, with stately courtesy, whether I had a cold in the head.

I was about to answer that a tiresome cold, which had afflicted me some six weeks before, had

happily disappeared, and to thank him for so kindly inquiring after it, when an opportune nudge from a præpostor to the right, and a cavernous whisper of "Hat!" from a præpostor on the left, brought me to a vague sense of the situation. I uncovered, reddening; and Dr. Goodford then begged to know, with the same high politeness as before, to what he was indebted for the pleasure of my visit.

I spoke without a shadow of diffidence, and asked for a *non dies* for the whole school (Jickling had furnished me with the precise words) in honour of my birthday, which fell on the 25th of October.

I have not forgotten the interminable laughter that followed, nor the convulsions of one particular præpostor, aged eleven, and habitually mournful, who rolled about against the colonnade pillars, holding his hand to his waistband, and shrieking "Oh my!" from the intensity of his feelings. I was known by the name of *Non Dies* ever afterwards, and heaven knows what never-ending jokes this first successful and cruel hoax of Jickling's entailed upon me.

The only one who did not laugh at it was Asheton ; and as he had seriously set himself to the regeneration of Jickling, he told that youth roundly and firmly at fagging next morning that he meant to have an end of this. Jickling sulked. Ever since that disagreeable morning when Asheton had hinted at the necessity of his turning over a new leaf, his life had not been happy. Asheton insisted now upon his washing his hands and face properly, brushing his clothes and keeping his room in order. Nothing could be more distasteful to Jickling. His room was generally a higgledy-piggledy of torn books, crumpled papers, and scattered clothing. Great splashy stains on the carpet-marked the spots where he had let fall successive inkstands ; and the solitary picture in his room was crashed right through the middle, from having been used as a target for a roll in a moment of sportive ebullition. All this was put to rights. The broken picture, by Asheton's order, was consigned to the dust-bin ; the clothing was, by Jickling himself, acting under Asheton's surveying eye, neatly folded and put away into drawers ; a cageful of unhealthy dormice, whom Jickling

seemed to rear tenderly for the especial purpose of taking them out in his pockets and letting them loose in school, was summarily confiscated; and on Jickling protesting loudly and untruly that these mice were his private and unseizable property, since he had paid for them, their full value (four shillings and ninepence) was remitted to him in money. On the whole, Jickling began to see that a firm hand was exercising its sway over him. Asheton went the length of seeing for himself every evening that Jickling learned his lessons for the next day, and did not pass his time tracing patterns on his bureau with a red-hot poker, as he much preferred to do.

But there was one point on which the feud between the two was ceaseless and terrible. Every day, or at least every half-holiday (and there were three of these a week) a game of football was played in our tutor's field, and everybody was expected to be present at it. The object was, in the first place, to train good football-players for the House Eleven, and, in the next, to make the games really pleasant, which they would not have been had the attendance been fitful and limited.

Now, nothing would induce Jickling to play. Most solemnly was he told that if he were not at his post in the field at the time when the game began, it would go hard with him. He declined to take any notice of these menaces, and when the game began he was invariably wanting. "What's the use of my going to football?" he pouted angrily, as Asheton caught him in the very act of bolting up the High Street one morning after eleven-o'clock school. "I never touch the ball once during the whole game. It's always you swells who have it; and then, when the game's over, you drink all the beer, and I get none."

"That's not true, Jickling."

"It is. I turned the can upside down yesterday; there was nothing in it. I ought to know."

"You're teaching Rivers to be as disreputable as yourself. What are you doing with Jickling, Rivers?"

"He was going to show me a dog," I stammered.

"A mangy brute you swore you had got rid of at the end of last half," said Asheton, indignantly,

to Jickling. "Now I'll be bound you meant Rivers to buy this dog of you. Did he, Rivers? Tell me the truth."

I hung my head. Such was indeed the aim of our expedition. Jickling had consented to sell me a mongrel cur, which I didn't want, nor he either, for fifteen shillings and sixpence. He had assured me that it was part of established and insurmountable usage to possess a dog, and that by not having one I should be holding myself up as an object of scorn and derision to the community. We were on our way to the bird-fancier's where Jickling kept the brute.

Asheton guessed much of this by our faces, and though we were standing in the most frequented part of the street, and though, as I have already stated, it was not his habit to take the slightest notice of a lower boy in public, he dealt Jickling such a box on the ear as almost sent him backward into a shop-window. "A fellow who will sell a worthless dog to a credulous school-fellow at twelve will sell spavined horses at twenty, and be kicked off race-courses at twenty-five," he exclaimed, pale with anger. "Now cut along, both

of you, in front of me to Fisher's, and I'll follow. We'll just see into this matter."

The pair of us trooped on together without a word—Jickling dogged and sullen, but not crying, for he was not the fellow to shed tears at a slap of the face, or indeed at any other physical mishap. Asheton walked at a safe distance behind—near enough to preclude all idea of escape on Jickling's part, far enough not to let it be seen that he had us both in custody. In this way we reached a small and dark bird-case shop, which we entered, and so passed down a long and narrow passage at the back into a yard, which was, like all bird- and dog-fanciers' yards, filled with curs chained to kennels, plaintive terriers who had their ears cropped and were whining shiveringly; wool-stuffed and pin-trussed bird-skins, set up in the sun to dry; melancholy rabbits in hutches, and so on. Jickling's dog, conspicuous by a total absence of breed and by deficiency of hair, was seated on his hind-quarters, and set up a dismal music at our approach.

There was an old man, with a weather-beaten hat, giving a puppy milk out of a broken saucer.

He looked up, expecting to see some of the lower boys, who were his most constant customers ; but on catching sight of a fellow in the Eight, he rose from his stooping posture and fingered the brim of his head-dress.

“ Fisher, which is Mr. Jickling’s dog ? ” asked Asheton, brusquely.

The man addressed as Fisher pointed to the beast, and added, apparently for his own private satisfaction, for he could scarcely expect that anybody else would concur in the remark, “ And a ’andsome dawg too.”

“ Is he paid for ? ” continued Asheton.

Fisher glanced at Jickling as if to know what this meant. Jickling wore such a hang-dog expression that there was no making out. Asheton had taken out his purse, which was a manner of eloquence that Fisher seemed to understand. He cast a second look at Jickling, and then said,—

“ Yes, sir, but there be twelve shillin’s owing for the keep and doctorin’ of him. Very ill that dawg has been—took more than a bucketful of physic last holidays.”

As if to assent, the cur raised his head aloft and piped the most dolesome notes.

"Did Jickling tell you there were twelve shillings owing?" inquired Asheton of me.

I shook my head. Jickling, seeming to apprehend a second edition of the box on the ear, backed to a prudent distance. But Asheton simply said, "It looks, Jickling, as if you had meant to sell this dog without telling Rivers that he was virtually in pawn, and leaving him to find it out for himself when he had paid you the money. But as this pretty transaction was not completed, you are entitled to the benefit of the doubt. Now pay Fisher."

In sulky silence Jickling fumbled for his purse, and presently muttered that there were only six shillings in it. Asheton looked for himself afterwards, feeling Jickling's waistcoat pockets, and ordering him to turn those of his trousers inside out. This injunction only produced an odd half-penny, seeing which Asheton said he would pay the other six shillings himself, and did. "And, now, what's the sum you were to give Jickling, Rivers?" proceeded he, looking hard at me.

"Fifteen-and-six," I answered, piteously.

"What a muff you must be!" he rejoined, with a half-smile. "Well, Jickling, I shall buy your dog of you—you may consider that I owe you nine-and-six."

"A 'andsome dawg, sir," repeated Fisher, with suppressed enthusiasm. "What's to be done with him?"

"Since you seem to admire him so much, you may keep him," answered Asheton. "And now, you two, be back to college, and go off to the football field. Your nine-and-six, Jickling, I shall give to Spankie. You told me at the beginning of the half that you owed him nothing—I've learned that you never paid him at all."

"I did pay him," grumbled Jickling. "Spankie has told you a lie." But, as if to render the discomfiture of Jickling complete that morning, we were no sooner out of Fisher's shop than who should come waddling down the pavement but this very Spankie, who immediately made a wheezy dart towards Jickling, and spluttered, in the fat way peculiar to him, "Ah, Jickling, sir, you're a bad lot, sir. Owed me ten bob, you did, sir, and

never thought of giving me a sixpence of it. No, sir—not you, sir—catch you, sir ! ”

He is dead now, poor Spankie, and there can be nothing personal in sketching him as he was in his declining age—a fat, puffy, red-faced man of sixty, with a greasy hat which, if boiled down, might have furnished a pint of oil, and a double-breasted faded blue coat, buttoned military-wise up to his chin. He was well off was Spankie, and public rumour made him out to be richer than perhaps was really the case ; but for certain he had subscribed 50*l.* to the building of St. John’s Church in the High Street, and for certain, too, he led a snugly luxurious existence in the small well-furnished house he rented near the Fives’ Courts. Of a Sunday, too, he would bloom out superbly in black clothes, grey gloves, a smoothly ironed white or nankeen neckcloth, and a hat of unexceptional finish—in which guise he would walk, prayer-book in hand, to the church he had helped to build, and declare himself a miserable sinner with a fervour that was very much to his credit. But the distinguishing feature of Spankie was his acquaintance with the nobility of these realms. The man

was an ambulating peerage. He knew Lodge by heart, and Burke's Landed Gentry, and everything about everybody who had ever done anything, or was likely to do anything by-and-by. Impossible to catch him tripping as to who was the son of who, or who was the heir to this or that estate. The following pattern of dialogue would take place between him and new fellows in the lower school or fourth form, who wished to buy wares of him on credit.

"Spankie, I want you to tick me," would say a young gentleman some three feet and a half high, directing his hand towards the fruit-basket.

"No, sir ; I never tick, sir. What's your name, sir ?"

"Plantagenet," would answer three-foot-six, raising the lid of the basket, and thrusting his head in.

"Oh, the Earl of Plantagenet. Yes, my lord ; many's the apple I've sold to his Grace your father ; but he chiefly liked tarts, did his Grace. Help yourself, my lord. I never takes ready money of a nobleman, my lord. Not that they

often offers it me—they don't; but it would be all the same if they did, my lord."

Whereupon young Plantagenet *would* help himself, and do so again the next, and the day after,—and, at the commencement of the next school time, find himself charged five times more than he expected; for it was a sagacious custom of Spankie's to charge rather according to the means of his customers than according to the actual value of the goods they had purchased of him. In this way mistakes were prevented.

As to Jickling's debt, it probably amounted, in real truth, to five shillings, or thereabouts; but Spankie, with a very pardonable love of round figures, had set it down at ten, appending an extra penny-halfpenny for form's sake, and to convey the idea that he was sedulously minute in keeping his accounts. He now called energetically upon his debtor to liquidate the moneys due; and appealed, bowingly and puffingly, to Asheton, to see justice done him.

"There is no reason to excite yourself," said Asheton, coldly—for he evidently disliked to see an Eton fellow insulted in this pitiful way by a

tradesman—and he handed Spankie a half-sovereign. “This,” said he, in a dignified tone, that quickly brought Spankie’s greasy hat from off his venerable head, “this is money I owe Mr. Jickling, and he has requested me to pay you. But for the future, mind, whatever Mr. Jickling takes of you will be paid for there and then. You understand?”

Spankie either did or didn’t understand, but he made a profound inclination of the head, saying “Yes, sir ; of course, sir ; I always knew I could trust Mr. Jickling, sir. ’Ave a apple, Mr. Jickling ? That’s what I’ve just been to Windsor about, sir, to buy apples at the market, sir—a fine Ribstone—penny apiece, sir ; pay me when you please, sir.”

Habit was so inveterate in Jickling, that, despite everything he had just gone through, he actually stretched out his hand on hearing that a new credit was opened to him, and would have taken the forbidden fruit had not Asheton pushed him roughly by the shoulder, exclaiming, “You incorrigible young beggar you ! I declare there’s no trusting you even in one’s sight. Now run off, and if I don’t find you at football when I come,

you'll see what will happen. As for you, Spankie, I warn you that if you trust Mr. Jickling again, I shall forbid him to pay you. Whatever he owes you I shall get from him, and hand over to my tutor to put into the poor-box. You know I keep my word."

We played football, Jickling and I, that day, and were kept severely to that pastime on every subsequent half-holiday or holiday. Asheton reasoned that whilst playing football one was at least out of mischief; and much as Jickling disliked the game, and little as I myself enjoyed an amusement which consisted, for lower boys, in racing in a flannel shirt after a football which only upper boys caught, we soon had to make a virtue of necessity. Punctually as the time for beginning the game arrived, Jickling would be seen to march ruefully on to the ground, under the escort of Blazepole, Greegleby, and young Stumpes, whom Asheton had imagined to render responsible for his presence; and such was the wholesome effect of these repeated and much-hated games, that Jickling positively found no time in which to get into scrapes, and tided over a whole month without

being once flogged or getting a *pæna*—if we except fifty lines once or twice for being late in school or at chapel. Those, however, who have seen a nag reputed weedy and vicious, ridden by a horseman who kept it well under by dint of whip, spur, and curb, know full well that the conduct of the animal, whilst it has its rider on its back, affords no sort of clue to the demeanour it may adopt when the rider is away ; and so it was with Jickling. His doing well for a time was a matter of compulsion. Asheton's look-out was so constant, that shying or kicking was impossible. But Jickling was not reformed by any means ; and before this could be effected, he had still had one quagmiry scrape to wade through, which, whilst it almost cut his career of scrapes short to all eternity, was indirectly the means of making him turn over a new leaf much more decidedly and definitely than Asheton or anybody else would ever have dared hope. This scrape was brought about by Windsor Fair.

III.

WINDSOR FAIR was an annual episode that enlivened the month of October. It was a three days' saturnalia, during which the royal borough was turned upside down, and all Eton kept in a state of adventurous effervescence. Eton boys were forbidden attending the fair, owing to cheap gambling that was conducted by means of low roulette-tables in a spot called Bachelor's Acre ; but like many other prohibitions at Eton, this one was made with a very complete knowledge on the part of the masters that nobody had the slightest thought of paying attention to it. Very strange the spirit that occasionally actuated the Eton authorities. If it had been really desired to keep the boys from the fair, one would think that nothing would have been easier than to station somebody permanently on Windsor Bridge, to send back every boy who attempted to cross. A master

might have done it. But instead of that, the course pursued was, to give out that all boys caught at the fair would be flogged; and as this sort of warning never yet deterred any Etonian from doing as he listed, the scene at Windsor during the three days was one of reverend gentlemen in white cravats perpetually chasing boys in and out of booths, over gingerbread stalls, up and down highways and byways, greatly to the edification of profane spectators, and considerably, of course, to the upholding of pedagogical authority.

Now it stood to reason that Windsor Fair should be to Jickling the one bright date in the year's calendar. It was better than the Eton and Harrow match, and than the 4th of June; for you broke no rule by going to Lord's or to Surly Hall, whereas in the Windsor Fair there was the fun itself, then the pleasure of being vainly chased by a master you hated, then the ineffable delight of breaking rules, all three rolled into one—perfect bliss in short. It therefore fell like a thunderclap on Jickling when, the evening before the first day of the fair, Asheton said to him, "Mind, Jickling, I won't have you going to the fair, for you'll be

certain to come to grief in some way, if you do ; and I've made up my mind that grief and you are to be kept apart this half. If I hear you've been to the fair, you shall have double fagging for a month, and something else besides."

Not go to the fair ! Even Stumpes and Blaze-pole thought this a stretch of prerogative. They had been following, with a sympathetic eye, the efforts of Asheton to make Jickling walk in a straight line, for Jickling had been undoubtedly such a byword of reproach in the school, that he almost reflected discredit on the house in which he boarded. But for all this, to interdict a fellow from going to the fair, where everybody went, and where Asheton himself would certainly go, was hard ; and Stumpes minor and Blazepole looked compassionately upon Jickling, as though he were being victimized. As for Jickling himself, he said nothing ; but I readily guessed, from the expression that stole over his stubborn face and flashed out of his shifty eyes, that to the fair he meant to go, all prohibitions notwithstanding ; nor was I wrong.

The next morning, at about half-past eight—

that is, after first school—I was engaged in taking a “bun and coffee” at Brown’s the pastry-cook’s. There were four pastry-cooks within the College precincts, and Brown’s was the lower-boy house—a place where you got such coffee as I have never tasted since, either here in England, or on the Continent, or in the East ; though, to be sure, I have not tried Brown’s coffee since I was fourteen, which, perhaps, renders me indulgent. The price of this coffee per cup was twopence, and that of the buttered bun that accompanied it another twopence—total price of the banquet, fourpence. We could cram about a score together, at most, in Brown’s little shop, and the place was always as full as an egg ; so full, indeed, that on the morning in question, being on the point of stuffing my last fragment of bun into my mouth, I was powerless to turn round, on feeling an arm laid upon my sleeve tuggingly ; but I recognized the voice. It was Jickling’s, and said, “ I say, Rivers, I’m going to the fair. Will you come ? ”

“ And fagging ? ” I asked, astonished.

“ I’m going to shirk it,” said Jickling.

“ And prayers ? ”

" I shall shirk them too," was his answer.

" I daren't," I ejaculated, timidly.

" Then you're a funk," responded Jickling, with great contempt. " This is just the time for the fair. All the masters are busy between nine and eleven. There'll be two at the most there, probably only one, and we've got two whole hours and a half before eleven-o'clock school. I'm going, whether you do or not ; but I must say I shouldn't like to funk a swishing as you seem to do," sneered Jickling, with diabolical derision.

" I don't funk a swishing," I protested, blushing up to the roots of my hair.

" Then you funk a licking from Asheton for shirking fagging," railed Jickling, waxing more diabolical. " I don't care that for Asheton ; and I'm just going to the fair now on purpose to spite him, the brute."

Now I did not like the imputation of "funking." Being in my heart of hearts considerably afraid both of the swishing and the licking, I was the more concerned to show that I stood not in the slightest dread of either of these ordeals. Some more conversation ensued between us, importu-

nately tempting on his side, feebly resisting on mine ; and the upshot of it was that, several other boys agreeing to join the party, I no longer had the moral courage to hold aloof ; and in another ten minutes (having swallowed a second cup of coffee to screw up my valour to the starting-point) was crossing Windsor Bridge with a beating pulse, throbbing heart, and eyes strained to see if they would not behold a master spring up like a jack-in-the-box at the next street-corner.

The noble old town that Windsor is! and, perhaps, never more noble than during these fair days, when the glitter and bustle of the booths, the animation of the crowd, the tinsel trappings of beast and giant shows stand out in contrast with the stately grandeur of the Castle. The booths used to stretch right down to the Castle's foot, at the point called the Hundred Steps, and wind away through the town up to the Bachelor's Acre once mentioned, making an unbroken row on either side of the roadway. At Bachelor's Acre lay the focus of the fair. Here were the circuses, shooting-galleries, skittle-alleys, Aunt Sallies, roulette-tables, and all the fun that is popularly described as fast and

furious. In the town everything was more mild. One could buy gilt gingerbread there, flashy porcelain, false noses, masks, and other interesting objects, and indulge in such slow gambling as may be afforded by betting pence on marbles set to race down an inclined plane studded with pins. But if you wanted excitement, your way lay to the Acre, and thither, of course, we all sped.

The walk through the town without meeting with a single master had emboldened us, and I, for one, felt much more comfortable in stepping into the Acre than I had done in setting foot on that boundary bridge that divides Buckinghamshire from Berkshire. Jickling, who was always bold, showed himself the more so on this occasion from the possession of a sovereign, given him a couple of days before by a relative, who had unexpectedly come down to see him. A fourth-form fellow with a sovereign imagines himself, not quite master of the world perhaps, but lord of a good half of it. Jickling was no sooner in the Acre than he directed our attention to the booth where a learned pig was exhibited, and suggested we should go and see, the admission being moderate—*1d.* a head.

We streamed all together into the learned pig-show (I think we were nine), then into a booth where was a calf with two heads, and so on through the usual round of fair monstrosities, not forgetting a lady who weighed five-and-twenty stone, and who, to give Jickling an idea of her muscular powers, which he seemed disposed to question, lifted him up in mid-air by the seat of his unmentionables, to his intense disgust. By this time we had forgotten that such people as masters existed, and a little intoxicated by the beating of drums, the squeaking of pandean pipes, the braying of horns, and the inspiriting sounds of loud barrel organs spurring the cavalcades of merry-go-rounds, we turned a ready ear to the blandishments of a costermonger, who, behind his barrow, had got a roulette-table, screened by a kind of sackcloth contrivance of poles and ropes, and "safe as the Bank."

The costermonger was one of many who conducted business on a safe and pleasant principle. They decoyed as many boys to stake pence, six-pences, or shillings as they could, and then, when the board was well covered with money, a cry of "Here's the masters coming!" would be set up by

a husky confederate ; whereat the boys would jump away like affrighted frogs, and the stakes would disappear flowingly into the pockets of the costermonger. Unfortunately, even such a simple system as this has its drawbacks, and the main one was that, after trying on the joke a few times, it became the story of the wolf in the fable, and nobody would believe the husky confederate, charmed he never so wisely. Jickling, who had gathered practical experience of Windsor Fair the year before, was up to a good many moves on the board, and his first step when behind the sack-cloth screen was to exclaim, in his quick, wild voice, as he laid a shilling's-worth of pence on the table, " Now, no master *can* see us here ; so if this or anybody else cries out *cave*, it'll be a false alarm, mind that." I suppose the words could hardly have been out of his mouth, when, without the slightest warning, without a single premonitory indication of peril, the visage of the Rev. Mr. Jones, a stern master, intruded itself behind the screen, and froze us all—including the costermonger-croupier, I think—positively breathless with astonishment and terror. Mr.

Jones must have seen us at a distance, before we had passed behind the canvas, and he now contemplated us with that calm, sure, and sardonic eye of a sportsman who has got all his fish in the net, and need not hurry himself. In his right hand he carried a pocket-book, from which he proceeded to draw the pencil, ready to write our names down.

The space of awful time that we stood looking at one another—he grimly elate, we speechless—can scarcely have exceeded ten seconds, but it remains branded on my memory as if it had been ten hours. My sensations were as if the soles of my boots had become of lead, and suddenly soldered me to the earth. Then Jickling, who had inspirations of genius in such moments, abruptly dashed his handkerchief over his face, and, pulling me by the hand, shouted wildly, “Come! if we bolt, he can’t catch us all.” And, saying this, dived through the aperture facing that where the master was standing, and rushed out precipitately, forsaking his pence to their fate, I following him, and the rest plunging after me.

All this was enacted with the instantaneousness of thought; but imagine the breaking of the net

in the sportsman's hands just alluded to, and you will have the position of Mr. Jones. He had made too sure, paused just one triumphant second too long to consider his haul before calling upon us for our names, and here was the result. But he was a man of energy, and quickly buckled to. Though all the nine of us had flown headlong and quadrivious, dexterously eluding the grabs he made to right and left of him, he did not forget who was the author of this misadventure, and without a moment's hesitation started after Jickling and me, leaving the other seven to go their ways unhindered.

No pair of gazelles ever ran as Jickling and I were doing. Bachelor's Acre is a hollow and sunken piece of ground, full of ups and downs, and rugged. Over these ups and downs we leaped and bounded, with our hair flying to the winds, and our eyes starting out of their sockets. At least, I answer for mine. Jickling, more cool, buttoned up his jacket as he ran, kept his elbows well pressed to his sides, and threw his head back to give his legs all their fair play. We scampered thus to the end of the Acre, and scaled its steep

sides, not knowing until then whether Mr. Jones was following us or the others. But here all doubt left us. Our friends had sped to the four cardinal points, and were presumably safe ; but, straight as the crow flies, the Rev. Mr. Jones was bearing down upon us, our start of him being not more than fifty yards. The moment's agony which burst upon us when we made this discovery may be readily conceived. But it was of no use feeling agonized. "There's a passage down there which leads across Peascod Street to the Great Western station," gasped Jickling. "Keep up, Rivers ; don't blow yourself." And this was no vain caution : for, short as the distance was we had covered, I already began to feel as if I could not go much further at this rate.

The passage into Peascod Street was a terribly narrow one, where two could scarcely run abreast, and where, should we chance to meet anybody coming in the opposite direction, we might be so delayed as to be caught like rats in a trap. Jickling saw this ; indeed he had a hunted fox's instinct for scenting danger. There was a cad with a basket on his head coming out of the

passage as we ran up. This seemed providential. Jickling took out a half-crown, threw it to the man and panted, "Do you see that fellow in the white tie running behind us? Stop him at any price. Trip him up!" The cad was an honest cad. When Mr. Jones appeared at eleven-o'clock school that morning, a fine scar on the face, and some remains of dust on the shirt-front, testified to the neatness with which he had been sent sprawling on all fours by a purely accidental movement of the foot performed by the basket-man. This increased our lead by a hundred yards and gave us a second's breathing-space we much wanted; but we were not safe for all that. Mr. Jones was not the man to drop us for a fall more or less. A short, sallow, straddling little divine, with an immense lurking power of limb, he had determination enough to chase us till Christmas if need were. We soon found this out; for having imprudently paused to draw breath in the uphill alley leading out of Peascod Street to the railway, instead of waiting until we reached the railway itself, where we might have dodged our pursuer down passages and given him the slip by concealing ourselves in a porter's

room, we saw him emerge from the Thermopylæ where he had been tripped up, brushing his knees with his handkerchief and purple with rage. He saw us, and was evidently stirred with delight to the depths of his soul, for he shot us a glance of no dubious meaning, and redoubled his pace, we doing the same by ours.

But now the hunt was going to assume a new complexion. In Bachelor's Acre there had been no great crowd at that comparatively early time of the morning, but in the streets it was another affair. Precisely as we reached the station a train of old Etonians, from Oxford and Cambridge, steamed in, and these, understanding at a glance what was the matter, when they saw Jickling and me run, broke into shouts of laughter, and gaily joined in the chase as spectators, to see how it would all end. Any inoffensive stranger who beheld the spurt that followed through Windsor Thames Street must have fancied it was a lunatic asylum burst loose. Two well-dressed boys with streaming faces running at the top of their speed as if they had been stealing spoons; fifty yards to the rear of them a clergyman of the Church of England, with

a most unchristian glare on his countenance, also putting his best foot foremost ; and behind the clergyman, the mob of university-men, unable to hold their cigars in their mouths from laughing, and doing their utmost—one must render them that justice—to impede Mr. Jones's progress by getting in his way whenever he seemed to be gaining too fast on us. There was especially one Oxford-man, whose name I afterwards learned was Martingale—Lord Martingale—and who did us valiant service. His lordship was an enthusiastic sportsman, and this boy-hunt was to him like drinking fine elixir. Racing along by our sides with his eyeglass screwed in his left eye and his lavender-gloved hands describing frantic gyrations in the air, he bellowed vociferous encouragements to us in a turf voice : " Now then, young 'uns, go it ! I'll back you to win at five to one ! If you're not caught you breakfast with me at the ' White Hart ' to-morrow—champagne and all the deuce and a five-pound tip for both of you. Go it, I say, go it ! " His lordship's noise was so terrific, and, in a general way, the scene was so tumultuous, that it brought out tradesmen to their doors ; a few

windows were thrown up ; some ladies paused on the pavement to look and exclaim, pityingly, what a shame it was to chase those poor boys so ; dogs began to bark, and all the tagrag and bobtail of Windsor scattered among the fair booths hurried up, hooting, and formed a befustianed rabble, that may have been two hundred strong by the time we were at the bottom of Castle Hill, after a race that had left Jickling and me with hardly the ghost of a breath in our bodies. But now it became urgent to take some immediate resolution. We could not go on long like this. If Mr. Jones did not give up the chevy, as it was not likely he would now that he was the cynosure of so many eyes, we must inevitably be overtaken, for our legs were not of a strength to cope with his. Here was Windsor Bridge in sight. What were we to do—make for Eton, or branch off down the Datchet Road, towards the Home Park ? Jickling, undaunted to the end, though his strength and his hopes were beginning to flag, called to me in a broken voice for my opinion—meaning to say, had I wind and spirits enough left for a new effort ? I was not able so much as to answer ; and the question was

settled for us by Lord Martingale, who shouted that by going towards Eton we must certainly be caught, seeing that we should probably meet other masters in the street ; whereas, if we went up the Datchet Road, we might prolong the chase, and perhaps tire out our enemy. "Yes, but if we take to the Home Park," gasped Jickling, "we shall be run down in the open." "Needn't go into the Park," answered our Mentor, suddenly struck by an idea. "Make for the coal-wharves behind the South-Western Station : you can lie hid there, and then double when Jones has passed you, which he'll be safe to do if you don't give him time to see where you hide." But, unfortunately, this advice, like many other good counsels, was impracticable, by reason of its coming too late. Our pursuer was now not more than twenty yards behind us ; he was gaining too, and it seemed as though another couple of minutes must see our fate sealed. At this juncture, Jickling called upon me for a final spurt. We were in the Datchet Road, close to the South-Western station. In half a minute we had reached the door and dashed through, right into the midst of a crowd of people taking tickets for the next

train. A guard made an attempt to stop us ; Lord Martingale pushed him roughly aside with an oath. Down the platform we sped, stumbling over luggage, jostling passengers, and trampling an unfortunate dog under foot, amid piercing shrieks from his mistress. At the extremity of the platform, Jickling, leading the way, jumped down in front of the engine that was about to start, crossed the line, in disregard of the chorus of shouts and imprecations set up by stokers and porters ; ran for a short way between the two lines of rails, and struck off towards some waste grounds skirting the towing-path by the river-side. Martingale and I were of course close at his heels.

This was no bad move : for Mr. Jones, a clergyman, could not act in defiance of the railway company's by-laws, as we had done. He would be obliged to go round by the wharf way to catch us, and this would give us a start of about ten minutes. At least, so we reasoned ; but we reckoned without our host. Mr. Jones simply waited on the platform until the train had started—that is, rather less than five minutes—then, there being no objection to his crossing the line, did so,

and followed the identical path that we had taken. We learned afterwards that during the five minutes he spent on the platform the old Etonians with him had pleaded for us, appealing to him to renounce his pursuit, in consideration of the gallant struggle we were making. But the very gallantry of the struggle seemed to Mr. Jones the most cogent reason for bringing us to punishment. He proclaimed his determination, as he mopped his brow with his yellow silk handkerchief, and brushed what remained of mud and dust off his pantaloons, not to give us up on any account : and he kept his word ; for, as Jickling and I were pelting along the towing-path at about half a mile from the station, Martingale, who was in ecstasies at our escape, and counted upon our being able to find a punt or a skiff or something to take us across the river further down, looked round, and suddenly exclaimed, with real dismay in his voice, “ By Jove, he has stolen a march on us, and HERE HE IS ! ”

Something seemed to break inside me : it was my last spring of courage giving away. We had run so desperately, our hopes had so revived at the

thought that by passing through the station we had given our pursuer the slip, that to find this was all useless, and that we were on the very point of capture, was cruel. Martingale, almost as much concerned as we, cried out, with something very like emotion, "Well, never mind. D——n it! I'd rather do what you've done than win the Derby. You're a pair of young bricks, that's what you are, I'll give my solemn word." But this, after all, was but cold comfort. There we were, with the towing-path before us, an open space of mead to our right, and the river rushing in a broad swift stream to our left. Escape was impossible. In this despairing moment Jickling turned abruptly round, like a young cub at bay, looked at me with fire in his eyes, and in a voice of frenzy cried, "I say, can you swim?"

A thrill seemed to shoot through Martingale. He glanced at the river, then at me.

"Yes," I gulped, with a great dry sob; for indeed I could swim, having learned that accomplishment at home.

Jickling stroked the perspiration that was bathing his forehead, looked hungrily at me again,

and in that moment his Ishmael countenance was radiant.

"But swim—in your—c-c-clothes?" he stammered. "Can you? Will you take your oath you can?"

He had clutched me by the jacket.

"I'll take my oath I can," I panted, with the amazing courage of fear and hopelessness.

"Well, look here," said Jickling, darting a distracted glance behind him. "I'll believe you, and we'll swim for it. Only—h-hark, if you drown, I'll drown myself too! and if—I do that" (there is no depicting the solemnity with which he pronounced the next words) "my father, who is coming home from India next Christmas, will write to *The Times* and say it was your fault."

I think I felt the terrible weight of this threat; but Martingale, who apparently saw nothing to laugh at, turned round and made a sudden and violent use of his handkerchief. When he showed us his face again, I could have sworn his eyes were not clear.

"You shan't drown, I'll swear that!" he said, energetically; "not unless I do so too."

We had scrambled down the bank by this time, and were holding on by some tufts of grass. The water was quite deep under us, and turgid and rapid. Opposite us lay the Eton playing-fields. Jickling shivered, but I could see it was not for himself, but for me. He looked wistfully, to see if the master would not give up the pursuit ; then seeing that Mr. Jones (who, of course, could have no idea of what we were going to do) was close upon us, he muttered, "We can't let ourselves be taken," and floundered headlong in. Even before I had risen to the surface after following Jickling, I could hear the tremendous uproar of astonishment and consternation, and withal of admiration, that arose when Mr. Jones and his companions perceived what we had done. The throng of old Etonians, roughs, and street-boys that had escorted the master, crowded on the bank, straining their eyes with genuine anxiety to see what would become of us, and surely thinking that we were not going to rise again. But when it was seen that we not only rose, but struck out for the opposite shore as well as our heavy water-filled clothes would allow us, loud cheers burst forth and rose in peal upon peal

to encourage us. Mr. Jones, who was not a hard man, and whose sense of humanity was now getting the better of scholastic considerations, ran in dismay up and down the bank, shouting to us that if we would come back he would not report us. But we either did not believe him, or did not hear him, or thought that once in, it was as well to go the whole way. Jickling was swimming a little in front of me, his tall black hat bobbing curiously above the water like a float. As we reached mid-stream, however, he slackened so as to let me come up with him, and faltered with a sudden expression I shall never forget: "Mind—you swore you could swim, so if anything happens, it won't be my fault, will—it, eh, Rivers?" "No," I gasped, not immediately understanding what he meant; but then it passed through me with an instantaneous flash that we had both of us overrated our strength—that, worn out as we were, we were making no way against the stream, and that Jickling had said this because he felt himself sinking. He turned round again, as if wanting to say something, with a terrible expression of anguish in his eyes; but his lips as they opened disappeared under water. I made a

sort of unconscious clutch at him, and he rose ; but with all the strength left, he shook himself free and gasped as the stream bore him out of reach, "No, you'll drown." And then I remember no more, for I sank too.

IV.

IT was rather more than a month after this that Jickling and I were seated in my room together in my tutor's house, looking rather cadaverous, both of us, with our pale faces and close-cropped heads. We had been within an ace of drowning. Lord Martingale and some other old Etonians had saved us; but a brain-fever had supervened, and once again, after escaping a watery grave, we had seen death face to face. However, that was all over. We were now on the fair road to convalescence; and Mr. Jones was calling upon us every day to learn how we were, and to cheer us with a few minutes' talk: for he had a good heart, this Mr. Jones, and took a liking to us after the terrible adventure of which he was the unwilling cause.

It will scarcely be believed that, on recovering, Jickling showed himself what he had always been

—that is, much more delighted at the exceptional character of his last scrape than thankful to Providence for the way in which he had come out of it. On the particular day when we were seated in my room together, as I have just said, he was charming the leisures of convalescence by manufacturing a short paper tail like a kite's, evidently with the intention of pinning it to some comrade's jacket as soon as he should be well enough to go into school again. Asheton entered as he was writing on the tail the words "Please kick me," saw the work, shook his head, and said, with a kind, half-pitying laugh, "Always the same, Jickling!"

Jickling did not like Asheton. He put away his tail, with a grumble, in his pocket, as if he were afraid it was going to be taken from him, and muttered, "I don't see any harm in that."

"Nor would there be any, if it wasn't of a piece with so many other tricks of yours, Jickling. You'll give up those tricks now, after all that's happened, won't you, young man?" And he laid a hand on Jickling's shoulder.

"What's happened? what tricks?" asked

Jickling, in great discontent, moodily twitching his thumbs.

"Well," replied Asheton, "you and Rivers there have become heroes as it were ; and it's been said that a fellow who has the stuff in him that you showed on that Windsor Fair day is worth better things than to be continually in hot water, and at sixes and sevens with everybody."

Jickling changed colour slightly, went to the fire, poked it violently without its having any need of such operation, and said, "You're always badgering me, Asheton."

"I want to see you a good fellow, and on the highway to becoming a man," answered Asheton, with almost a woman's patience.

"What is, is," said Jickling, doggedly. "You can't unmake yourself, and you can't do what's impossible."

"And what's impossible?" asked Asheton.

"Why," cried Jickling, breaking out, and throwing down the poker with a clatter, "it's impossible to be this and that simply because you are told to be it ; and it's impossible to do this or that, when you've not strength enough. What should you say

if I told you to win the football-match against the Collegers this year? It seems you're in the Eleven—and they're stronger than you. You know it. So let me alone."

There was a moment's silence, then Asheton walked straight up to Jickling. He had become very pale, but looked at his unhappy fag with a steady and earnest expression in his eyes.

"I know the Collegers are stronger than we," he said, "but will you promise me"—(he paused)—"will you promise me, Jickling, that if I win the match for our side—you'll change?"

Jickling looked growlingly surprised, and glanced at him with sullen suspicion. "It's not much to promise," he said at last "for you won't."

"But *will* you promise?" asked Asheton.

"Well then, yes," said Jickling, with a dry laugh and a shrug.

"Very well," answered Asheton, and he left the room.

The match, Collegers *v.* Oppidans, played every year on St. Andrew's feast, 30th of November, was the great event of the football season. At the time of which I am writing it was not usual for

the Oppidans to win every year, as has later been the case. The match was played “at the wall,” a peculiar sort of football, which the Foundation boys practised more than the Oppidans, and as a result the College team (although the Collegers had only seventy boys to choose from as against nearly six hundred on the other side) was extremely powerful and difficult to beat. On the day of the match, Jickling and I, who had not yet been out of doors since our accident, obtained leave to go out for two hours—just to see the match and return.

Play began at half-past twelve, and there was always an enormous crowd—every boy in the school, every master and master’s family, and some hundred or more of old Etonians, being generally present. Jickling and I took up our position at that part of the ropes where the lower boys congregated, making a frightful hullabaloo in response to the gown-boys, who, at every advance of their side, shouted like fanatics, as if the safety of the three kingdoms were being staked. For those who have never seen “wall” football played, a description of the game would scarcely be intelligible ; and for those who *have* seen it, it would be useless.

Let me only say, therefore, that the points to be scored are "goals" and "shies," a single goal outnumbering any quantity of shies. By the end of three quarters of an hour's play, three shies had been scored by the Colleger's Eleven. The game was going dead against the Oppidans, who, opposed to a formidable trio of Collegers, named Bullockson,, Hulkey, and Drayman, were overweighted, borne down, and forced back into their own ground, or *calx* every moment, notwithstanding all their gallantry. Asheton had performed prodigies of valour in the Oppidan cause, but to no purpose. Five minutes yet remained before the game finished; and the conclusion seemed foregone. Jickling, who had been watching the game with a curious, silent interest, said with a short laugh (but rather softly as I thought), "Asheton's played well, but he won't win."

Did Asheton hear him? Did some secret voice, I mean, whisper to him that some such words as these were passing Jickling's lips? Anyhow, he glanced towards us, or at least towards the mass of yelling lower boys (for he did not know where we personally were), and with a determined gesture

took his cap off and threw it on the ground. It was the action of a man who is preparing to fight.

Then this is what we saw. The ball was then within the Oppidan calx, but a sudden movement brought it before Asheton's foot. He stuck to it, and from that moment it did not leave him. Crouching, stumbling, running over it, playing with feet, elbows, and head all together, he "bullied" it right down the whole length of the ground, unheeding kicks, pushes, mobbings, or anything else. Hulkey, the College "post," shinned him savagely; Drayman bore down upon him with his shoulder, like a battering ram; and just as Asheton was within a few yards of the Colleger calx, Bullockson, the captain, made a rush as of thunder, and both rolled over together, heads first, in the mud. There was a moment's breathless lull in the whirlwind of shouts, to see who would rise first with the ball. It was Asheton. Limping, and bleeding, for the blood was flowing in torrents from his nose, he still crouched over the ball, and, with something like superhuman energy, shot it over the calx-line, followed it, raised it with his foot against the wall, and touched it with his hand, whilst the umpire, in a loud voice, and amid delirious excitement, shouted

"Shy!" A "shy" means the right to take a shot at the goal with the football, the whole rival eleven standing in your way to obstruct you. Not a boy or man spoke, as Asheton, white as a sheet, poised the ball, raised it, and, with another look towards us, threw it straight forward. There was a thud, a dismayed shout, and then the Oppidan umpire, throwing his hat in the air, cried "Goal."

At that moment the College clock clanged out half-past one—the time for play to stop. The Oppidans had won the match.

With a roaring—loud, deep, and continuous as the waves of the sea—the Oppidans burst the ropes and rushed on the ground, scampering towards Asheton to carry him in triumph. Jickling and I were borne along with the rest, adding our own voices to the tumult mechanically. Asheton seemed to expect us. Just as the mighty Bullockson was taking him to lift him on his shoulders, he made a step forward, and holding out his hand (the first and last time he had ever done such a thing to a lower boy in public), said, "You see, young man, it *was* possible."

Jickling said nothing, and walked along by my side back to our tutor's house without opening his

lips. He was pale and moody, and I remember he kicked a particular pebble before him, as he went, with a strange and absent expression. At dinner-time he said he was not hungry, and went and shut himself up in his room. He had not reappeared by tea-time ; and as it so happened that I desired to see him that evening about something or other, I went to his room and opened the door. The hinges did not creak, so that he did not hear me nor look up. He was seated at his table, with his head buried in his arms, and he was sobbing as if his heart would break.

* * * * *

If you ask nowadays of any old Etonian who Jickling was, he will probably answer you, "Jickling? Do you mean the fellow who was Newcastle Scholar and in the Eleven? He went to Oxford—didn't he? and took double honours."

"I think so."

"And, stay, didn't he marry somebody? I think it was the sister of Sir Frederick Asheton."

AV

